

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, and 6-11 are pending in the present application. Claim 5 has been canceled without prejudice and Claim 6 has been amended without adding new matter by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Veneklasen et al. (U.S. Patent 6,392,333, herein "Veneklasen") in view of Shinada et al. (U.S. Patent 5,626,926, herein "Shinada") in further view of Takigawa et al. (U.S. Patent 4,430,570, herein "Takigawa"); Claims 1, 4, and 9-11 were allowed; and Claims 6-8 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

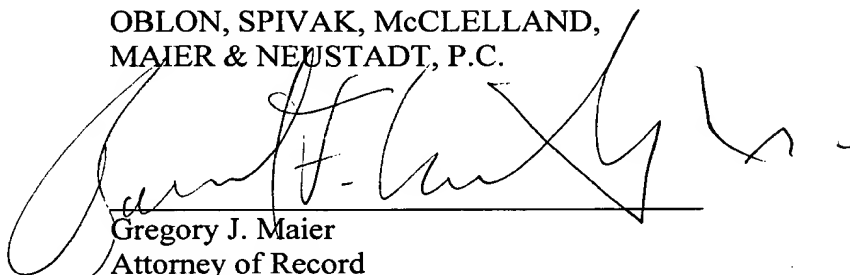
Because the present amendment reduces the number of issues for appeal by canceling Claim 5 and raises no new issues, entry of this amendment under 37 CFR § 1.116 is believed to be in order and it is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. In view of this indication, rejected Claim 5 has been canceled and Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form including the features of its base claim, as suggested in the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants believe that Claims 1, 4, and 6-11 are in condition for allowance.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Gregory J. Maier, is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

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